The Rt. Rev. George Hills was Lucky . . . . . Some Said by God's Grace

BISHOP MISSED DOOMED VESSEL

The articles in this continuing series are taken, in the main, from old files of The British Colonist, forerunner of today's daily newspaper which still bears a part of the original title. They are intended to shed light upon conditions and events of the early days in Victoria.

EXCEPT by the Grace of God, the first Bishop of Columbia might never have reached Victoria and his far-flung diocese.

The Rt. Rev. George Hills fortunately missed connections with the steamer Northerner and consequently escaped the shipwreck, off the coast of Oregon, which took so many lives only a few weeks before his arrival here.

He himself made reference to his escape when he acknowledged an address of welcome presented to him Jan. 31 by leading citizens.

The Rev. Edward Cridge, pioneer Church of England clergyman in the colony of Vancouver's Island, as it was then, together with Chief Justice Matthew Baillie Begbie, led more than a score of clergy, churchwardens and members of the church when they welcomed their Bishop officially.

In the formal terms of the day they read:

"We . . . beg to approach Your Lordship with the assurance of our heartfelt sympathy for the mission which has brought you to this portion of your diocese and tender our hearty congratulations on your safe arrival . . .

"Your Lordship's prompt declaration so soon after your arrival that you had sufficient confidence in the vitality of the religion we profess to entrust the church to the voluntary support of its members, has been received with much satisfaction. It gives a great impetus to individual exertion in the cause of religion and ensures the devoted co-operation of the laity.

"It is with peculiar pleasure we learn Your Lordship's intention to direct your experience and knowledge to the promotion and maintenance of schools for the education of the rising generation—a benefit we rejoice to find will be extended to the Indian race . . ." But of course they would be separate schools and some considerable time in coming.

There were 800 signatories to this document.

It was in his reply that the Bishop made reference to having missed his connections with the Northerner, for which he gave thanks to God.

* * *

THE STYLE OF journalism in these days was very different from the present.

In the British Colonist of the same date there is this item: "The jury in the case of Elizabeth Hildebrand against Nicholas Mathewson, brought to recover $10,000 damages for breach of promise to marry, brought in a verdict of $5,000 in favor of the plaintiff. This sum, it is hoped, will make some amends for the spinster's blasted hopes and lacerated heart."

* * *

AND JUST to give an idea of the value of property in Victoria at this time, there was an item reporting the sale of a lot, 24 feet by 90 feet, at the corner of Fort and Government, for $3,300. J. D. Carroll, a prominent man of business here, was the buyer.

* * *

READERS of these articles are familiar with the fight which Amor de Cosmos, first publisher and editor of the British Colonist, was waging against the entrenched government of Governor James Douglas. He spared no effort to undermine the influence of the government party, which, he felt, and probably quite correctly, was dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company of which Douglas was chief factor.

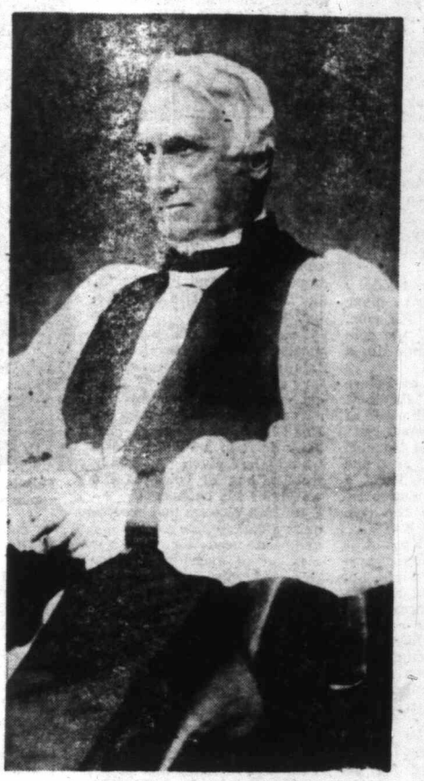
One can understand, in the light of this situation, the reason for the barbs in his editorial on the eve of the opening of the second legislature's session.

"The new provincial menagerie may be expected to meet about Feb. 26," de Cosmos wrote.

"Between now and then the preparation to create an impression of statesmanship immense, will be made . . . Elocution will be studied by posturing before a mirror . . .

"Vice royalty (this was Douglas), without a guard of honor, will seat itself on a falling throne, surrounded by the councillors for life, made at pleasure . . . The usher will summon the obedient 'commons' . . . when mimic royalty will announce in a set speech the opening of the second legislative assembly of Vancouver's Island.

Of course, he observed, the procedure was not constitutional, any more than was the prorogation of "the defunct legislature."



"Assemblymen are already buzzed and buttonholed for increase of salaries and offices and nice little schemes. Retainers must be paid, for who would work for a candidate without pay?

"I'd ask you in but my wife isn't here and she's the one who does the talking."

Pages of the Past

Some have got their 'sweetener' in British Columbia already . . ."

The editor was referring, possibly with some lack of delicacy, to certain appointments which Governor Douglas had made for the colony of British Columbia, which he also administered.

Politics were wicked in those days.

* * *

THERE WAS a lighter side to Victoria living.

"The Chapman family," read a notice in the British Colonist 99 years ago, "are fixing up the Music Hall, Government Street, in first-rate style for a theatre, and will open it on Saturday (Feb. 4) with the play, "The Lady of Lyons."

"For the accommodation of the public the building will be divided into three separate apartments, with separate entrances. The parquette, with side door for the ladies to enter, will accommodate 125; the pit, entered from the street, 140; and the gallery, entered from the street, for Indians, 100.

"Every encouragement should be extended . . ."

* * *

J. G. McKAY was organizing a number of resident Scots into Victoria's first St. Andrew's Benevolent Society.

The BAY of PLENTY

Continued From Page 2

they are the largest exporters of Chinese gooseberries in New Zealand. It is expected that the demand for this fruit will double itself within the next five years.

The McLoughlin-Prew 20 acres of Chinese gooseberries follow the wire fence system. They find this system easier to manage for extensive planting and less costly than the pergolas. The rows run 200 yards long on wire supported by concrete strainers and intermediate wood posts. The vines are planted in blocks of nine, so that one male plant is adjacent to eight female plants —a proven ratio.

The land slopes northwards. In the southern hemisphere this is the best lay of land. At this time New Zealand was experiencing a long warm dry spell in which the orchardists didn't know whether to hope rain would hold until the peaches were picked, or fall to swell the citrus . . . but the Chinese gooseberry roots were enjoying the moisture hidden under the mulch

The partners expect to have 40 tons of Chinese gooseberries this year from the five acres in bearing. It seems like a big day's work, but Mr. McLoughlin assured us that one man could harvest up to a ton a day! The production aim is 200 tons from the 20-25 acres when full bearing.

How fast the vines grow was demonstrated by one plant which, cut back to a nubbin last season, this season had shot out both sides of the vine so that the tips of each growth were 60 feet apart! Thirty feet each way! On the forest margains in the mild-wintered Yangtze Valley of China the Chinese gooseberry vine grows to a height of 30 feet or more. Cultivated in New Zealand the vigorous twining vines grow to huge proportions if not controlled.

Truly the good earth of the Bay of Plenty, uncultivated until the introduction of the kumara over 600 years ago, has received and returned generously to the husbandman. Tree tomatoes from Peru, citrus fruits from America, fruit trees from England, lemons from China, passion fruit from Australia and possibly South Africa, and on through the ever-growing list of commercial fruits. They were all brought from distant lands to flourish in New Zealand.